

we have seen intense politicization of the ethics process, with Members increasingly using ethics charges against other Members as a way of waging political warfare. House conservatives lodged ethics charges against then-Speaker Jim Wright and pursued them doggedly, leading to his resignation. Last Congress, in what many saw as "payback time", Speaker Gingrich faced extensive legal and ethical charges from House critics, resulting in a reprimand and large fine. Under the intense partisanship, the entire House ethics process almost broke down and a moratorium was placed on new ethics cases.

WHAT'S NEEDED

The House has shown in the past that it is able to mount serious efforts to improve its ethics system. I believe that such an effort is needed now.

First, we need to depoliticize the process. Although this will be difficult to do, given the lingering hard feelings on both sides of the aisle, we need clear signals from the party leaders that bringing frivolous charges against another Member for political purposes will not be tolerated. In addition, the Standards Committee could issue a formal criticism of Members who make such charges. I also believe we need to involve outsiders more in the ethics process to depoliticize it and defuse tensions. For example, the Standards Committee could call upon a panel of private citizens to help investigate charges of misconduct against a Member.

Second, we need to expand our "preventive ethics" efforts. One of the most important roles of the Standards Committee is to try to head off misconduct before it occurs, by providing guidance and advisory opinions for Members about which specific actions would violate House ethics rules. The Committee has recently undertaken some important steps along these lines, by sending ethics notices to every congressional office. Such efforts need to be continued and expanded.

Third, we should simplify and clarify the House ethics rules. Recent changes, for example, have made the House gift rule more than ten pages long, which no one can understand. The Code of Conduct works best when it reflects broad, basic standards of good conduct, with the Committee providing more detailed guidance when specific questions arise. We should also make it clearer that core standards, such as the duty of Members to at all times reflect credit on the House, lie at the heart of the Code, and that our ethics standards are higher than simply whether or not some action was illegal.

Fourth, we need to adopt some needed ethics reforms. The public is rightly concerned about practices allowed under the current House ethics rules which call into question the integrity of the legislative process, such as Members being allowed to accept expensive trips from groups with a direct interest in legislation before Congress. Changes are also needed in our campaign finance system, which the public widely perceives as corrupting.

Fifth, we need to broaden the conception of ethical conduct for Members. Most of the rules in the Code of Conduct deal with financial matters, for example, Members not accepting gifts or converting campaign funds to personal use. But the public is more concerned about a broader range of ethical action—whether Members level with their constituents, whether they keep their promises once in office, and whether they keep their constituents' interests most at heart. Some years ago the House passed a resolution, since technically expired, called the Code of Ethics for Government Service, which did contain broader standards and emphasized

that "public office is a public trust." These standards should be added to the Code of Conduct, and the Committee should publicize adherence to these principles.

Finally, we need to improve public understanding of House ethics. As Congress observers note, media coverage of Members is usually spotty unless there is a scandal or wrongdoing to be reported. The vast majority of Members are honest, conscientious, and genuinely trying to address the nation's problems. But the public too often doesn't hear that side. Those who care deeply about the institution of Congress need to not just speak out about its problems but also speak out about what's good about Congress and its Members.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT J. FOX

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to our colleagues' attention one of northern Virginia's outstanding citizens, Robert J. Fox. On April 11, Robert will reach a milestone in his public service career, marking 50 years of federal service in the U.S. Army and the Postal Service.

Robert J. Fox was born on January 16, 1927, in Philadelphia, PA, where he grew up and attended Catholic schools. He entered the Army in March 1945 and served in the Infantry Airborne, reaching the rank of first sergeant by 1949. He served in Germany in the 102d Division and when the 102d Division went home, he stayed on with the 1st Infantry Division.

He continued to reenlist and went to the front lines in Korea with the 7th Infantry Division in 1952. He served 16 months in Korea. Robert was awarded the Bronze Star, the Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the Good Conduct Medal with five loops, the WWII American Campaign and Victory Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Theater Medal, the Occupation of Germany Medal, Korean Service Medal and the National Defense Medal.

During his military career, he attended 16 different Army schools, worked in Intelligence learning several different languages, and served several more tours in Europe. He was discharged from active duty at Arlington Hall after 20 years of service, but also served two more years in the Army Reserve. He served as assistant to the Master of the Grange in Washington, D.C., for two years. He met and married his wife Jacquelyn Ann in Sperryville, Virginia, where he still lives today.

Robert joined the Post Office Department on April 13, 1968, as a letter carrier. He has served his entire postal career at the Warrenton Post Office in Fauquier County, where he developed a reputation as a dedicated, hardworking employee. He has always shown concern for his customers and the community, making several lifelong friendships.

Robert has been active in the Postal Service's Carrier Alert Program, in which carriers watch out for senior citizens on their route, alerting friends and relatives when something appears wrong. He personally saved the life of an elderly woman on his route when he discovered that she had fallen on the steps inside her home and no one else was around to

help her. Without Robert's intervention, she could have laid there for days.

Most notably in his career, Robert has never had an accident as a postal employee. He is a member of the Million Mile Club, which recognizes postal employees who have driven 1,000,000 miles or more without a vehicle accident. He has gone years at a time without using any sick leave and is still one of the most dependable employees in the Warrenton Post Office.

A respected and active member of the community, Robert once spent four years providing free volunteer labor to rebuild the Sperryville Baptist Church. He has two sons, Rev. Joseph Robert Fox, who served as a fighter pilot in the U.S. Marine Corps and is now a minister in the Virginia Beach area, and James Patrick Fox, who resides in California.

Mr. Speaker, Robert Fox is a remarkable man whose contributions to his community and his country as a leader and volunteer have made a difference in people's lives. I know our colleagues join me in honoring his outstanding achievements through his half century of public service.

TRIBUTE TO LT. JOHN REGAN ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute today to a dedicated police officer who has spent 36 years protecting the lives and property of his fellow citizens, Lieutenant John T. Regan of the Chicago Police Department.

Since 1962, Lieutenant Regan has served the city of Chicago and his community, including many people from my district, as a member of the Chicago Police Department. Most recently, he has worked in the Violent Crimes Office of the Area One Detective Division. On March 5, 1998, however, Lieutenant Regan retired from the police force. His presence will certainly be missed, both by his fellow officers and by the members of the community who he has served diligently for many years.

Mr. Speaker, I salute Lieutenant John T. Regan on his 36 years as a police officer. I would like to extend my very best wishes for continued success and happiness in retirement and in the years to come.

LOCAL PROFILES IN COURAGE

HON. WILLIAM J. COYNE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 1, 1998

Mr. COYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to three men from southwestern Pennsylvania who stood up for what was right.

Over the last 40 years, we have overturned the laws that once upheld race-based segregation and discrimination. This accomplishment should not be underestimated. Unfortunately, the fact of the matter is that while discrimination has been curbed, it has not been eliminated.